REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

I. PRELIMINARY REMARKS

This application is directed to a system and graphical user interface which allows a central administrator to perform a number of highly useful and efficient functions involving the locating, copying, editing, encoding, storing, and transmitting of media assets. One particularly advantageous feature of the present invention is that allows a central administrator to schedule large transfers of media assets for days and times when the transmission facilities, which can involve both internal facilities such as an internal computer network, and external facilities including the Internet, telephone lines, and satellite transmission links, are relatively unused. This allows a system administrator to efficiently conduct the desired operations while minimizing the system slowdown experienced by other users of the system, and while minimizing the cost of satellite bandwidth for such large transfers. The system administrator can also identify and intelligently select sources or storage locations of the media assets for transferring assets, again so as to minimize network burden and data bandwidth charges.

Claims 1-50 are pending.

Claims 1, 2, 4-23, 25-36, and 38-50 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as obvious over Katinsky (U.S. Patent No. 6,452,609) in view of Yost (U.S. Patent No. 6,567,796).

Claims 3, 24, and 37 are objected to as depending from rejected base claims, but are otherwise deemed allowable. Applicant thanks the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter.

II. GENERAL DISCUSSION OF THE REFERENCES

The Katinsky Media Player

Katinsky, the primary referenced relied upon in the Office Action, is very different from the present invention. Katinsky discloses a media player and an interface for a user to control the media player. A web page is presented at which a user can manipulate media icons to determine a play list of media objects such as songs or videos. (Abstract) Each graphical icon represents a media object, and the graphical icons can be manipulated by the user to modify the play list. (Abstract) For example, the media icons may be dragged to the sequencer to add them to the sequencer. (Abstract) The user can build up and thereby define various play lists, and select which play list to play. (4:12-14). Banner advertisements may appear on the user's screen, and

the user can select the banner and drag it to the sequencer to add the media object such as a song represented by the banner to his play list. (2:22-30). Thus, Katinsky discloses a media pllayer with a graphical interface and user-defined play lists.

The Yost Automatic Data Report Generator

Yost, the secondary reference relied Upon in the Office Action, is also very different from the present invention. Yost is directed to an On-Line Analytical Processing system (OLAP). An OLAP is a system that retrieves and sorts through large amounts of data stored in data warehouses. (1:56-62). OLAP systems analyze the data from a number of different perspectives and support complex analyses against large input data sets. (Id.). The invention relates to a system for managing automatic broadcasting of information derived from OLAP system reports to subscriber devices, including email, PDA's, pagers, facsimiles, printers, mobile phones, and telephones, based on subscriber-specified criteria. (1:23-28). A primary purpose of Yost is to eliminate the need for users to initiate generation of reports which they desire, and then scan through the new report to determine if the relevant information has changed over the time period specified. (3:35-48). A system administrator can manage the scheduling of services to output reports to system subscribers. (4:3-4). Thus, Yost discloses an automatic data report generator for generating and sending user-defined and user-requested data reports to subscribers.

III. THE CLAIM REJECTIONS

Claims 3, 24, and 37 are deemed to contain allowable subject matter. The remaining claims are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Katinsky in view of Yost.

Claim 1

Claim 1 is directed to a centralized user interface at an administrator terminal in a network for managing operations including encoding operations performed on media data by selected ones of a plurality of media servers. Claim 1 includes the limitation that a "graphical user interface at the administrative terminal . . . enable[s] a user to select between a manual encoding mode for manually starting and stopping manual encoding processes . . . and a scheduled encoding mode for defining schedules for scheduled encoding processes to be performed by selected ones of the servers."

The Examiner contends that Katinsky discloses manual encoding of media assets, and Yost discloses a central administrative station at which the administrator initiates scheduled

encoding. The Examiner further contends that it would be obvious to combine these elements from the references because central scheduling would allow the timely downloading of desired multimedia content to a user of the Katinsky media player, thereby producing the claimed invention.

Applicant respectfully disagrees for several reasons.

First, neither of the references discusses encoding. Scheduling the playing of media in a playlist does not constitute a "manual encoding process" as claimed. Additionally, automatically generating reports of selected data at scheduled times does not constituted a "scheduled encoding process" as claimed. Furthermore, even if selecting a play list and automatically generating reports could be considered "manual encoding" and "scheduled encoding" processes as claimed, there is no suggestion or motivation to combine the references. Katinsky allows the *user* (media viewer/listener) to create his own play list and start and stop the playing of that play list. An administrator being able to schedule automatic report generation is a very different thing. It would not make sense to apply the automatic data report generation of Yost to the user-selection of media play lists of Katinsky's media player user. The whole point of Katinsky is to allow the user to flexibly build and play his own play list. A central administrator deciding what the user will listen to and when, such as suggested in the Office Action by the combination of references, runs counter to the whole thrust of Katinsky which is to give the user more complete and efficient control over his own play list(s).

Additionally, there is no disclosure or suggestion in either of the references of "select[ing] ones of a plurality of servers" and "manual[] starting and stopping manual encoding processes to be performed by selected ones of the servers" as claimed. Although Katinsky does state that media objects may be stored on "one or more media servers" (10:10-11), there is no disclosure or suggestion that a media asset may be stored on different servers, and that a central administrator will be able to browse the available assets on the different servers and select servers to perform the desired processes (". . . for scheduling encoding processes to be performed by selected ones of the servers") as claimed.

One of the advantages of the present system provided by the limitation of "selecting ones of a plurality of servers" that would not be present in even the combination of Katinsky and Yost suggested by the Examiner, is the ability to locate media assets on different servers, select the server from which it is desired to extract the media asset based on its proximity to the

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destination, and schedule the transmission of that media asset over the network or other transmission media at a time so as not to burden the network or incur excessive data bandwidth costs such as prime time satellite bandwidth charges.

Accordingly, claim 1 as recited defines a novel and nonobvious method for managing media and distributing assets.

Claim 19

Independent Claim 19 recites presenting options to the user "to select from manual control options including a start option for starting and resuming the manual encoding process, and a stop option for stopping the manual encoding process," and generating start and stop commands "for instructing said selected media server to start [and stop] the manual encoding process."

The Examiner cites Katinsky at col. 6, lines 1-6 and 10-18 as disclosing this subject matter.

Applicant respectfully disagrees. The cited passages in Katinsky merely disclose that a user can use start and stop buttons in a media player to start and stop execution of his video/audio media object play list. There is no suggestion or motivation in Katinsky for a "centralized . . . administrator terminal" for manual starting and stopping "manual encoding processes" as claimed. Claim 19 is novel and nonobvious for at least this reason, as well as reasons stated more fully with respect to Claim 1.

Claim 22

Independent Claim 22 is a machine readable storage device claim that is similar to Claim 1. Claim 22 is patentable for at least the same reasons as stated with respect to Claim 1.

Claim 35

Independent Claim 35 is directed to a server process. The claim recites that a user interface "include[es] a plurality of interface components enabling a user to select between a manual encoding mode for manually starting and stopping manual encoding processes to be performed by selected ones of the media servers, and a scheduled encoding mode for defining schedules for scheduled encoding processes to be performed by selected ones of the media servers."

As discussed more fully above, such limitations of allowing a user to select a particular media server, and starting and stopping manual encoding processes and scheduled encoding

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processes, is neither disclosed nor suggested by the references. Claim 35 is patentable for at least that reason.

Claim 2

Dependent Claim 2 recites that "each of the media servers is communicately coupled with at least one corresponding multimedia device capable of generating media data, and [each is] operative to activate a selected one of said multimedia devices, and also operative to encode the media data generated by said selected multimedia devices."

The Examiner cites Katinsky at col. 9, lines 2-24 as disclosing this subject matter.

Applicant respectfully disagrees. The cited passage merely discloses media objects including informational data associated therewith in a database. The passage does not disclose "generating" or "encoding" data. Furthermore a database is not a "multimedia device capable of generating media data" as claimed. A database can only regurgitate the data put into it.

Accordingly, claim 2 defines a method that is novel and nonobvious over the cited references.

Claims 6, 7, and 15

Claims 6, 7, and 15 "are rejected for the same reasons set forth in claim 1." (Office Action at 4). No additional information is given.

Applicant respectfully disagrees. Claims 6, 7, and 15 contain additional and substantive limitations not set forth in Claim 1.

Claim 6, for example, adds the limitations that "if said scheduling encoding mode is selected," then the "start time and a start date for the scheduled encoding operation" is specified by the user, and certain steps are performed including "generating encoding commands and associated encoding parameters."

The references do not disclose a scheduled encoding mode, and do not disclose generating encoding commands or associated encoding parameters as recited. The references merely disclose automatic generation and transmission of data reports as desired, and the playing of a media playlist. This does not constitute a scheduled encoding mode or generating encoding parameters.

Claim 7 includes the limitation of "selecting a scheduled stop date and stop time for terminating said encoding operation." This new limitation is not disclosed in the references. Further, there would be no motivation in the references to schedule a stop time for any of the

processes discussed in the references (even though those processes in the prior art references are not encoding processes). Katinsky, for example, does not suggest that a user would schedule a stop time. Instead, the playing of media objects would stop when the play list has played and is over. Similarly, there would be no reason to stop report generation and transmission of the OLAP reports in Yost. The sending of those reports would simply stop once the reports had been sent. Accordingly, claim 7 defines a method that is novel and nonobvious over any of the references.

Claim 15 includes the limitation of "play-back schedule interface components compris[ing] . . . a second group of components enabling the user to select from a plurality of options for specifying a play-back schedule duration." These limitations are neither disclosed nor suggested by the references. In Katinsky, the music or video is over when the play list runs out. In Yost, the report is done when the report is done. There would be no reason for a user to specify a "playback schedule duration" as claimed.

Claims 9 and 14

Claims 9 and 14 are rejected. The Office Action cites Katinsky at 5:10-16, and 4:56-65 as disclosing a name selection interface component enabling the user to specify an asset name for encoding a portion of the media data to be stored at a selected storage location.

Applicant respectfully disagrees.

The cited passages in Katinsky merely disclose controls for playing the media objects such as vertical-slider controls, a control panel for playing and pausing, and highlighting and dragging icons representing media objects. The cited passages do not disclose the recited limitations in Claims 9 and 14.

Remaining Claims

The remaining claims depend from at least one of the claims discussed above, and are patentable for at least the reasons discussed with respect to those claims.

New Claims 51, 52, and 53

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claims 3, 24, and 37, which are directed to process steps involving selecting and displaying preview video data, contain

alllowable subject matter. Applicant has canceled claims 4, 25, and 38, and has added new dependent claims 51, 52, and 53 which incorporate subject matter regarding selecting and displaying preview video data which applicant understands to be allowable subject matter, in order to claim this subject matter more broadly than in objected-to but otherwise allowable claims 3, 24, and 37. The subject matter of claims 51, 52, and 53 should contain allowable subject matter for the reasons that claims 3, 24, and 37 contain allowable subject matter.

No new subject matter is presented by the amendments to the specification or the claims.

Favorable consideration of the application as amended in view of the foregoing remarks is earnestly solicited.

No fees are seen as being necessary in connection with this paper. However, if any additional fees are deemed necessary in connection with this paper, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge them to our Deposit Account No. 16-2230.

Respectfully submitted,

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Joel D. Voelzke
Registration No. 37,957

OPPENHEIMER WOLFF & DONNELLY LLP
233 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 700
Santa Monica, CA 90401
Telephone: (310) 319-5459
Fax: (310) 319-3508